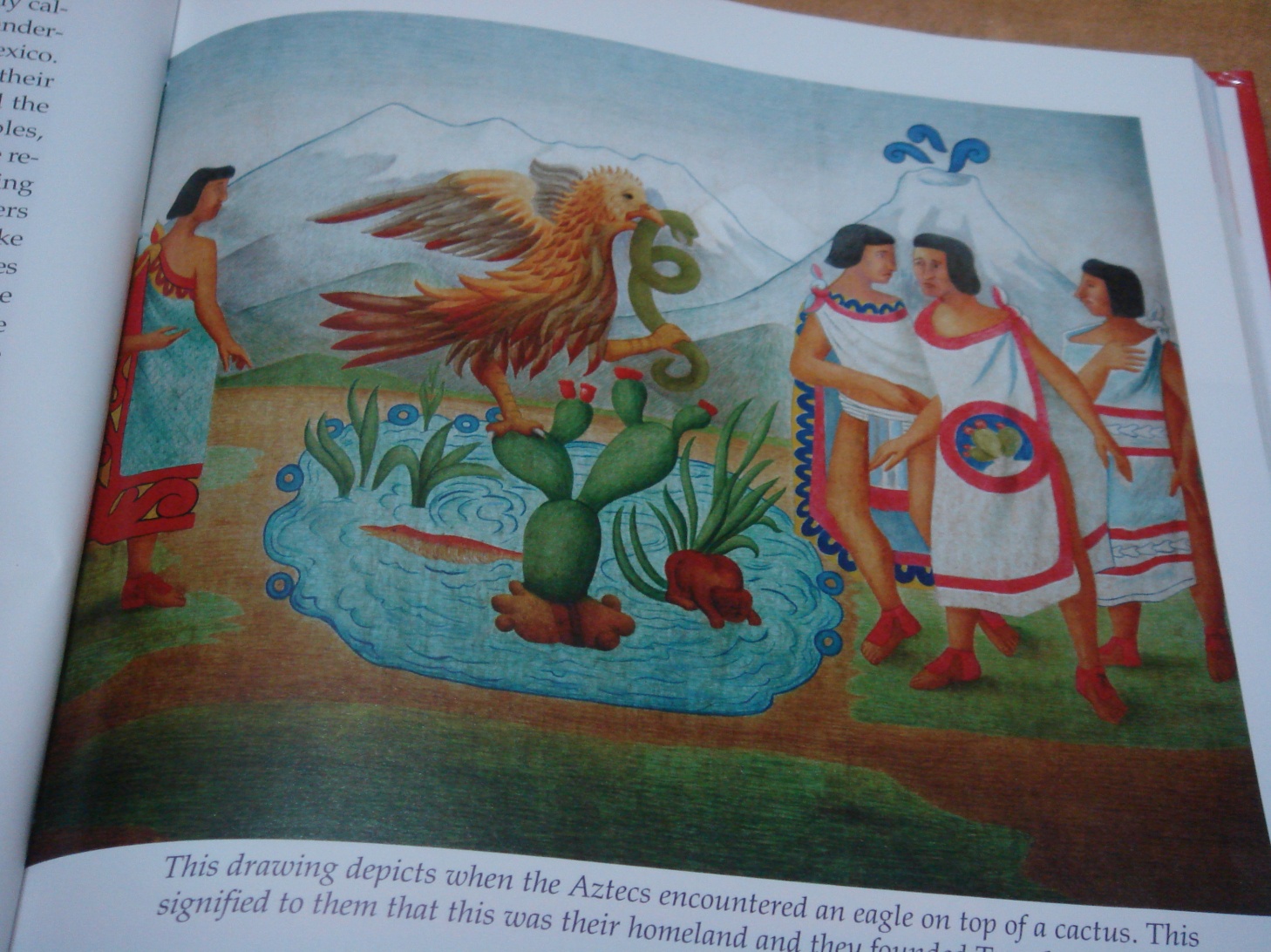
Artefact 1:

****

**The Great Migration:**

Aztecs(named after Aztlan) migrated Southwards from Aztlan to Mexico as they believed that the gods had ordered them to do so. Their fierce patron god, Huitzilopochtli said that they would eventually see a disrict sign indicating that they had reached their ulitmate homeland. That sign would consisit of a big eagle sitting on a cactus growing out of a rock.

When they encountered with the eagle resting on top of the cactus, they were certain they had found their homeland as prophesised. Hence, they ended their nomadic lifestyle and settled down in large communities, forming cities. They started out to establish the capital city, naming it Tenochitlan, which means “place of the cactus on the rock”.

Grateful to the eagle which signified their rightful hometown, they worshipped the eagle for its grace, reverence, greatness and excellence. These beliefs formed a long-lasting culture until today, as the current Mexican flag shows a mighty eagle perched atop a cactus on rock.

Would you want to put this as your opening to the exhibition – entrance poster – if so will not be called the great migration but the history and background to their establishment.

Artefact 2:



**Chinampas:**

After finding their homeland, The Aztecs built Chinampas. They were artificial islands made by weaving giant reed mats and covering them with mudded plants. These were used to extend crops into the swamp as they provided fertile soil and extra land to ensure a steady source of food even during times of flood.

This paved the way for the Aztecs towards an agrarian-based society. Aztec civilians depended heavily on agriculture, as they made sure that there are sufficient crops produced to support the towns and cities, and also their livestock.

The macehualli, otherwise known as the commoners, worked the land. Over the years, the Aztec civilians invented different farming techniques to produce better harvest. Hence, less people were needed to farm and these freed up time, introducing labour specialization. There was diversification of jobs and people became merchants, traders, craftsmen, palace cleaners, etc.

Besides solely using agriculture as a source of food, they practiced specialized agriculture. When the conditions were right to successful cultivate food surpluses, farmers grew crops that were not a source of food to prepare for future times of need. The surpluses produced were either stored or brought to the marketplace, and used for trading and selling, allowing the Aztec Civilization to develop the agricultural system to nearly perfection.

Any ancient tools used by the Aztecs that can be exhibited to complement this picture, else this picture be just depicting life from images and not an artefact

Artefact 3:



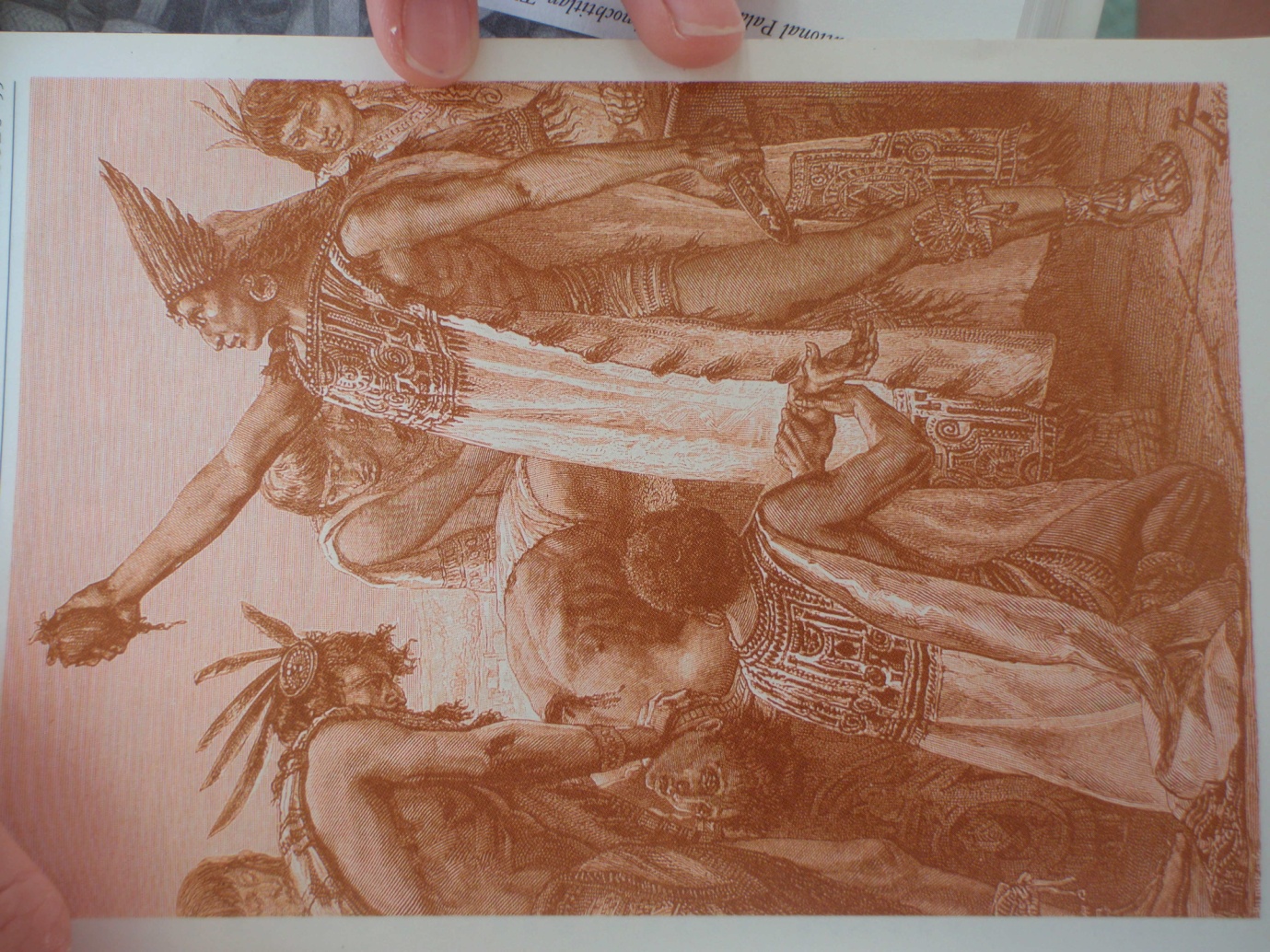
**Gold Mask:**

This gold mask was found at a tomb at Monte Albam-the mask of the god Xipe Totec. Xipe Totec is the patron of goldsmiths and the god of agricultural renewal, associated with spring ad rebirth. Hence, this mask symbolized the hope of rejuvenation and prosperity of the people. Burying the mask in the tomb was a symbolic act as the noble planned to carry this mask with him to the afterlife.

Moreover, since the Aztecs’ clothing was relatively simple, the gold mask was a mark of status and luxury. It belonged to one of the nobles (pipiltin), they had more privileges as compared to the commoners (macehualli). They were richer and hence could afford to buy gold jewellery such as this mask.

Specialized craft smiths designed this mask, as they had to be highly skilled in order to capture the religious meaning of Xipe Totec and portray it accurately. This made the mask an extremely sacred masterpiece, symbolizing religious beliefs and also luxury and nobility.

Artefact 4:



**Human Sacrifice:**

The Aztecs believed that the gods sacrificed themselves for the world to exist, so they had to repay this favour by offering the gods a gift: human blood. Hence, they carried out human sacrifices. They also felt that human sacrifice was necessary to ensure that the rains returned and the soil remained fertile, since they depended on agriculture.

Using a flint knife, the head priest opens the chest of the victim and extracts the heart. The victim wore ixiptla (the ornaments and clothing of the gods). During the sacrifice, the god was believed to enter the victim’s body; man and god united in a single being, to allow divine power to manifest it before the crowd.

These sacrifices were strongly encouraged by the government as they were a “policy of terror”, showing the commoners that the priests and rulers were in charge. Sometimes, the Aztec government invited foreign dignitaries as they performed the blood sacrifice on their prisoners, serving as an intimidation tool and to emphasize their power.

In other words, human sacrifice was actually a religious propaganda used by the government to form the basis of a cohesive and orderly society.

How will this be aligned to your proposal? Is this also a picture drawn to depict sacrifice not an artefact? What conclusion can you make from this depiction about use of sacrifice?

Artefact 5:

****

**A group of Nobles:**

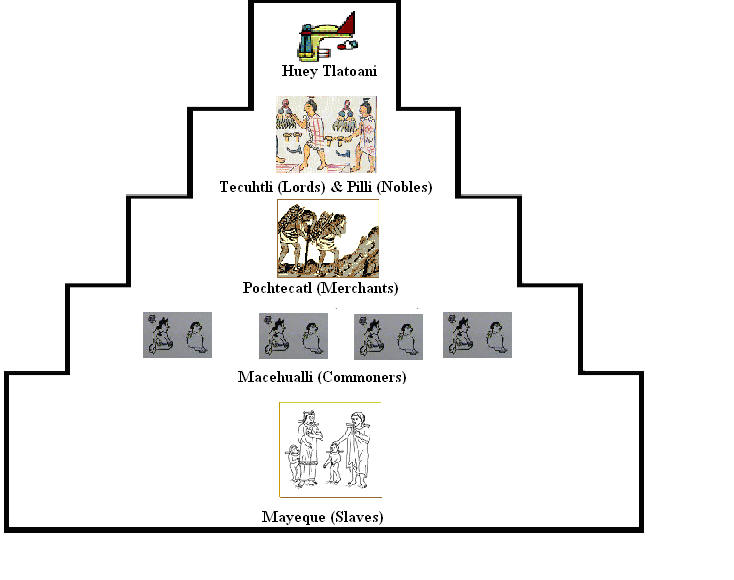
In Aztec society, the Aztecs believed that everyone has a right social place and role. In the social hierachy, the nobles were a higher rank than the commoners, hence an efffective way to mark this diffference in social status is through clothes and attire.

According to Montezuma’s Law Code: The nobles(pipiltin) were allowed to wear cotton mantles of certain make and design, and the minor lords, according to their valor and accomplishments, may wear others. Also, only the great lords are to wear labrets(lip plugs), ear plugs and nose plugs of gold and precious stones. The commoners were not allowed to wear cotton clothing, under pain of death, they can only use garments made of maguey fiber.

As seen in the picture, gold was an important adornment to a noble's dress. Other accessories to noble dress were feathers on the head and on their robes. Bright colours signified that the individual was of high rank. They often dressed in this manner to draw attention to themselves by communicating their status and wealth they had obtained. Another purpose of noble dress was to show that they were involved in government and were important religious leaders. However, the most important purpose was to show off their power and authority to the commoners.

This is interesting and can be put together with the social hierarchy and organised in your exhibition as society, hence Artefact 3 will be together here. Also, you will want to source for jewellery, clothes, hairpins or any accessories etc to support this picture

Social Hierachy in Aztec: ***(Note: this is not an artefact, it is meant to tie in with artefact 5)***



***Picture taken from Google Images(hyperlink listed in Bibliography)***

The highest level that is shown in the pyramid is the Huey Tlatoani, he is the chief speaker who is elected by a selected group of nobles.

The 2nd level shown in the pyramid comprises of the lords and nobles. However, the 2nd level is actually made up of 3 levels. The highest is the prime minister who carries out most of the day-to-day business of the government and oversees the financial matters. Next is the highly placed nobles who had distinguished themselves by their valor in battle or in some other way. Next is the nobles in general who were basically the ruling class with more privileges.

The 3rd level shown in the pyramid is the merchants. They often accummulated a great deal of money and luxuries due to trading. They also act as spies for the government(wow!) when they visit neighbouring cities and countries.

The 4th level shown in the pyramid is the commoners. They were basically ordinary labourers such as farmers, fishermen, weavers, carpenters, etc.

The last level shown in the pyramid is the slaves. Though they were free men, they depended heavily on the rich lords they worked for. Thankfully, the slave status is not hereditary.

Artefact 6:



**Marketplace:**

The market was the main source of economic activity in Aztec. Merchants and traders conducted barter trade, exchanging goods which were roughly of same value. Since Aztecs did not have money, prices were mainly based on comparisons with the worth of certain products of standard value, like cacao beans and pieces of copper.

Barter trade was vital to the succes of Aztec Civilization due to the fact that there would always be extras and shortages in the production of goods. Hence, trading away the surpluses to fill up the shortages ensure that the Aztecs would have sufficient food in their daily lives.

Merchants from neighbouring countries brought in goods not found in Aztec, while the civllians from different occupations brought in different goods, ensuring a wide diversity of goods. This satisfied the different needs of the civilians and sustainied a sophisticated lifestyle.

Trade brings about mutual benefits. It allowed Aztec to forge alliances with other countries, and partly gave rose to the Triple Alliance. (Aztec merged with Acolhua, and Huexotzinco to form a triple alliance to defeat the Tepanecs.)

Moreover, trade encourages exchange of ideas and new inventions. For example, bater trade was coined due to the need for a common platform to trade when there was no common currency.

Since trade brought in different goods, Aztec civillains could concentrate on producing their own goods without having to worry about the goods that they are unable to produce. This allowed Aztec to concentrate on mass production of their goods, causing Aztec to thrive and prosper.

Since it is barter trade, perhaps can use the things they use for barter trade. Also, the coinage – old coins?

Artefact 7:



**Aztec Solar Calendar:**

The Aztecs were fascinated by the objects in the night sky, such as the moon, stars, planets, comets and other celestial phenomenons. Without using telescopes or any sophisticated equipment, Aztecs figured out that every year had 365 years from their observations. This was an amazing feat considering that they did not use telescopes or any sophisticated equipment, it was pure obeservation.

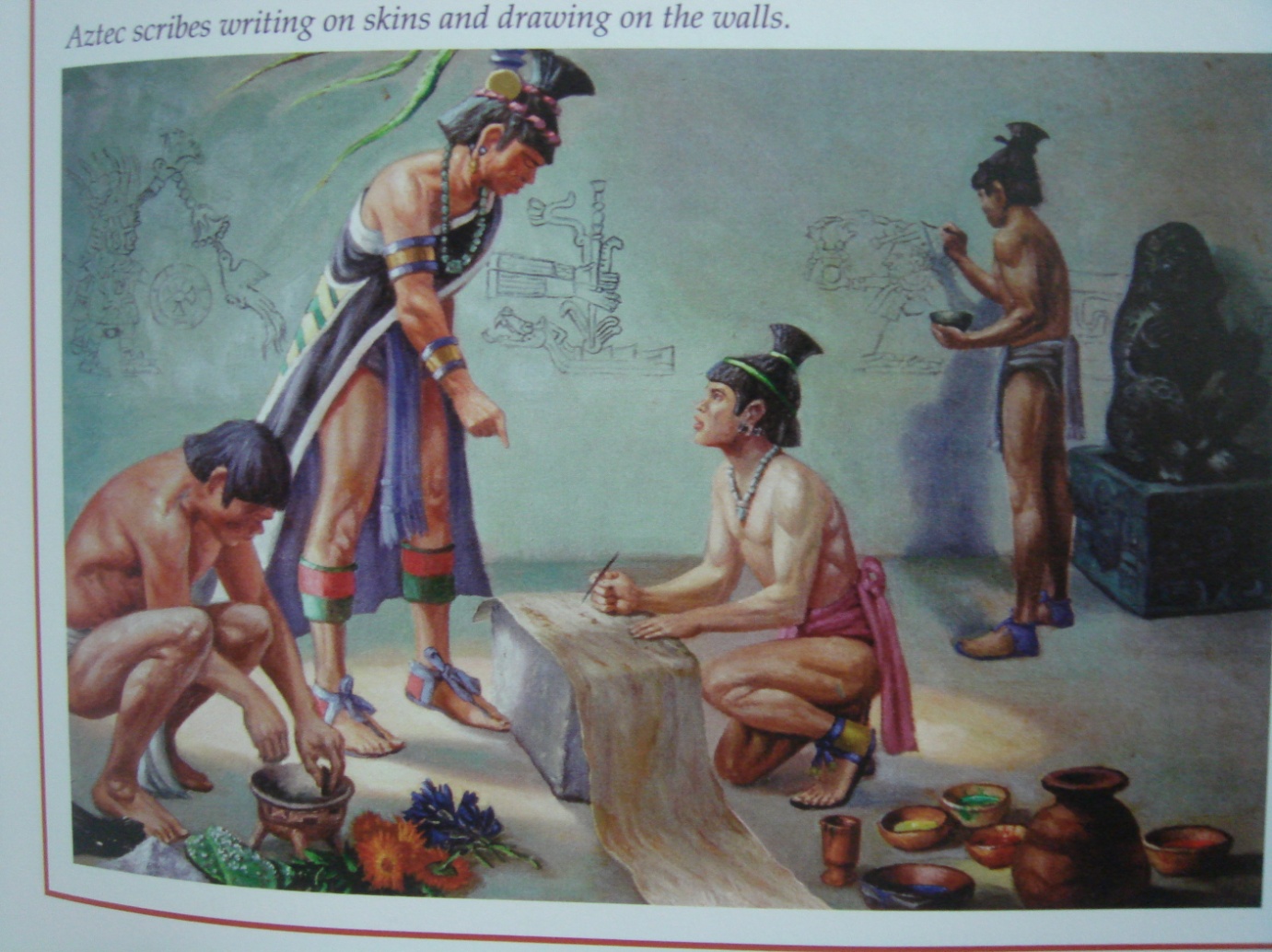
Hence, they created the Aztec Solar Calendar(Xiuhpohualli). It consists of the 365 days in a year, and was used to keep track of the seasons and various monthly events. It also consists of the 260 day ritual cycle which keeps track of religious observances and ceremonies.

Surrounding the god's face (located in the middle) are panels representing the four previous creations and destructions of the earth. Around these panels is a ring of symbols, representing the twenty days of the Aztec month. They named 18 months, and divided each group of twenty days into four weeks of five days each. Market days were held once each week.

The animals at the side of the calendar had special meanings. Merchants knew that they should only begin their journey on 1 Alligator, 1 Monkey, 7 Serpent or the best 1 Serpent, called the “straight way”. Approaching home, they would also delay on the route to wait for a good-day sign for the homecoming. Moreover, farmers relied on the signs of the days rather than the sign of the fields when harvesting. Furthermore, Aztec priests used the calendar to predict the fates of people. Hence, we can conclude that the Aztecs believed that timing and sign of days were crucial in maintaning a balanced world.

The complexity of the Aztec solar calendar and astronomial record demonstrates their advancement in the science and arts and how it had affected their lives and culture.

Artefact 8:



**Scribes:**

The Aztecs were literate and had developed a form of writing system. Most Aztec paper were made from the inner bark of fig trees. Aztec writing consisted of a mixture of pictures and glyphs, the glyphs were picturelike signs that represented a word, concept or name.

“[Art is the signature of civilizations](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/art_is_the_signature_of_civilizations/200501.html),” this quote is especially true for Aztec, whose art was a monumental feature other than their strong government. The skill and artistic flair of the scribes shown in the picture greaty impressed Spanish frair Bernadino de Sahagun, who left behind this wonderful memory of them:

*“The Scribe: writings and ink are his special skills. He is a craftsman, an artist, a user of charcoal a drawer with charcoal, a painter who dissolves colours, grinds pigments, uses colours. The good scribe is honest, farsighted and a good judge of colours He paints, applies colours, makes shadows, draws gardens, paints flowers and creates works of art”.*

Indeed, the Aztec scribes were multi-talented, and were also sculptors and painters. They did art in the form of paitings and sculptors, and also cartographed maps of the city. Moreover, they created poetry, narratives and literature which were used to teach the children litereary arts. Furthermore, they wrote books or codices to keep track of their history and calendar. Mainly, they recorded down battles and also creation myths.

Today, more than 500 codices containing material on myths, histories, religious hymns and poetry have survived. They revealed information regarding Aztec’s ideas and culture. Indeed, the writing system provided a common and vital communication system.

Instead of picture of scribe, how about the old letters or any writings to show the development of writing. You can even have the ancient brushes, ink slabs etc .... more meaningful than the pciture of the scribes

Artefact 9:



**Aztec weapon-Atlatl:**

Atlatl is a kind of throwing stick, it is roughly 18 inches long and consists of a wooden handle with a groove. The warrior placed a dart or short spear inside the groove and then fired the weaon by flipping the stick in a forceful overhand motion. The Aztecs also had several weapons, like the maquauhuitl , the bow and arrow, slingshots and many more. The variety of weapons indicated that the Aztecs were highly skilled in using their weapons in battles, and deadly in their warfare.

Warfare was one of the dominant concerns and enterprises of Aztec civilization, so Aztec had military prowness. Warrior-orientated themes and institutions were prominent at all levels of society, even young boys were exposed to combat at birth. Male education at schools emphasized military skills and values, and served to create warriors. Since young boys were educated about warfare from young, the Aztec army was extremely talented in combat.

Moreover, Aztec males’ identity was largely defined by his success in warfare. Although social status in Aztec society was largely predetermined by family lineage , warfare provided a means of climbing the social ladder. Young warriors elevated their social status by taking captives in battle and more importantly, they secured their status for descendants. Those valiant and successful warriors enjoyed a social status second only to the king and a few highly-ranked priests and military generals. Since being a warrior brought about huge benefits, many Aztecs volunteeered to be warriors, so there was never a shortage a manpower, instead they were superior in numbers.

This superiority allowed the Aztecs to successfully defeat their enemies in war and pleased their war god, Huitzilopochtli. Winning a war brought about huge benefits, as the Aztec government accquired new territory to expand and boost their status and power. Moreover, the Aztec’s economy also prospered as the conquered subjects had to offer tribute to the Aztec King. In this way, the Aztecs were assured of a steady inflow of foodstuffs, cloth, weapons, building materials, paper, feather and other decorative items and so forth. Hence, the Aztec could use the resources to further improve their infrastructure, and the daily lives of the civillains, benefit the civilization as a whole.

“modern” weaponry compared to their enemies? Impact of conquest – rephrase your last paragraph to make it analysis

Artefact 10:



**Great Temple of Tenochtitlan:**

The Great Temple of Tenochtitlan was a major archeological achievement. It was a twin-stair pyramid as it had two staircases, and its summit had two temples. The temple on the left side honored Tlaloc, the god responsible for providing a good rain season and an abundant harvest. His temple was decorated blue and white, the colours that symbolized water and moisture. The temple on the right was dedicated to the war god, Huitzilopochtli. It was painted in red and white in recognition of war.

Aztec archeology was hugely affected by their reverence for nature and religious beliefs, as shown by the Great Temple. The Great Temple was very tall and steep, as the gods lived in the sky and above the people. Being at the summit of the pyramid was the closest a person could be to gods.

Pyramid-temples, like the Great Temple, were built to strengthen and impose the Aztec religion and world view. They were believed to represent mountains, which were sources of water and fertility, and had a huge impact in agriculture. They also served as important sanctuaries where religious rituals were held, for example human sacrifice.

Besides religious purposes, the Great Temple played a huge role in government. In order to convince civilians that they were ordained by gods, they sponsored the building of the Great Temple, to create a sense of religious piety and imperial power. Therefore, it made it easier for the government to use religious propaganda to rule over Aztec, and form a cohesive and orderly society.

Get a artifact from this temple and use this picture as background. Again, rephrase some paragraphs and draw conclusions about the impact or consequence with this as evidence